



# EMC News

January 7, 2003

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## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

I hope you all had an enjoyable holiday season. 2004 promises to be yet another exciting year to be an environmentalist. While we will miss the incredible contributions from our two departing members, Barbara Ebert and Susan Brock, we welcome five new and promising members in January.

With the arrival of the New Year, several environmental laws are now in effect. Most notably, New York State has banned MTBE as an additive to gasoline. MTBE contamination of groundwater is widely publicized. However, drinking water regulators usually overlook two-stroke MTBE contamination of surface drinking water. Roughly half of all watercraft, and 100 percent of personal watercraft, are powered by two-stroke marine engines. Two-strokes emit 25-30 percent of their fuel, unburned, directly into the water. A single jetski can dump up to six gallons of raw fuel into the water in two hours. At this rate, one jetski dumps one-tenth of a gallon (a soda can) of MTBE into the water in two hours--enough to contaminate 13 million gallons of drinking water, or the amount consumed daily by a population of 90,000--with 5 ppb of MTBE. This is the threshold that humans report a turpentine-like taste. Good riddance!

Erie County becomes the seventh New York county to enact the Neighbor Notification Law. It passed by a 14-3 vote in December. We can only hope this will set the snowball in motion to extend this important consumer right-to-know law about lawn care pesticide use statewide.

Finally, California now bans open burning. Only New York and Pennsylvania still permit this in the Northeastern U.S. Open burning of household waste sends some of the most toxic materials known into the air: lead, mercury, cadmium, arsenic, PCBs, formaldehyde, hydrogen chloride, sulfur dioxide, dioxins and furans, to name just a few. Furthermore, the amounts of these poisons produced by backyard burning have been shown to exceed the estimates of even the most passionate burn barrel critics. A recent study by the NYS Departments of Environmental

Conservation and Health and U.S. EPA found that one household burn barrel is capable of emitting amounts of dioxin and other toxic pollutants equal to those given off by a small (200 ton per day) municipal incinerator. The NYDEC has identified this activity as one of the highest polluting in the state, and one that is the most easily prevented. Legislation continues to stall in the State Senate.

*Submitted by Stephen Nicholson*

## REDBUD WOODS UPDATE

On December 18 the Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission met for the second time to consider the Redbud Woods Parking Lot Proposal. With strong showing of Redbud Woods Working Group members, 6 EMC Members, several Cornell professors and other community folks present, the ILPC denied Cornell a certificate of appropriateness for the Redbud Woods parking lot! Without the certificate the City of Ithaca cannot issue a building permit (even though ordered to do so by the State Supreme Court).

The ILPC was the last public body that had any say...and they said **no**, by a vote of 4-1!! The decision was the feature article on the front page of the Friday 12/19 Ithaca Journal, complete with a color photo that captured all six EMC'ers in league with the "Red"bud Woods cabal. Ecoterrorism at its best, I say!

*Submitted by Steve Uzmann*

## NEW MEMBERS!

You'll be seeing some new faces at EMC meetings. Please welcome our five new members:

Meira Hertzberg (At-Large)  
Neha Khanna (At-Large)  
Mandy Kittelberger (Village of Freeville)  
William Kolberg (At-Large)  
Cindy Seliger (Town of Newfield)

*(Continued on next page)*

## **NEW EMC MEMBER ORIENTATION**

Wednesday, January 14th at 6:30pm

I hope this will serve to familiarize new members with the EMC's structure, purpose and responsibilities. If anyone is interested in attending, please feel free. Steve and I will cover new member information and then answer questions.

*Submitted by Heather Filiberto*

## **EMC NEWS REMINDER**

The *EMC News* was established to provide a convenient way for EMC committees to report their regular activities. The hope was to keep members updated on current events and to allow more time for guest speakers and discussion at the regular EMC meetings. Feel free to forward your committee reports and other times of interest each month for inclusion in the *News*. The *EMC News* not only reaches EMC members, but also local elected officials and other interested parties. It's a great way to keep everyone informed.

## **NEW YORK STATE RANKS 16 IN WORLDWIDE GHG EMISSIONS**

A new report by the National Environmental Trust shows that many individual U.S. states emit more global warming pollution than entire groups of developing countries. "This report demonstrates how critical it is for immediate action to stop global warming," said Rhonda Belluso, Hudson Valley Environmental Advocate for NYPIRG, "New York independently and the nation as a whole are major polluters, so we should be acting on every reasonable solution. Unfortunately, that's not the case now."

In 2003, Governor Pataki heard from his Greenhouse Gas Task Force, which found that New York could cap carbon dioxide, the predominant global warming pollutant, from power plants at 25% below 1990 levels with virtual no cost to consumers.

First in Emissions, Behind in Solutions shows that the U.S. has been and continues to be the largest emitter of global warming pollutants. 42 of the 50 U.S. states individually emit more global warming pollution than 50 developing countries, and five states separately emit more than 100 developing countries.

- \* New York ranks 8th in the U.S. for Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions.
- \* There are 99 developing countries with summed GHG Emissions less than or equal to New York.
- \* New York's population is over 19 million, and the population of the developing countries is over 680 million.

Other data shows that New York is also the 16th largest emitter worldwide.

"This report reinforces that New York alone has a real impact on global climate. It's time for the state to take responsibility for its emissions; Governor Pataki should start by capping carbon dioxide pollution from power plants," states Christine Vanderlan, energy program associate with Environmental Advocates of New York.

"In June 2001, Governor Pataki promised to be a leader to reduce emissions for New Yorkers. Upon receiving the task force's report, the governor suggested a regional cap, postponing action. Governor Pataki has left New York with a lot of talk, and a lot of pollution. New York can make a difference today, without hurting consumers." concluded Belluso. For a copy of this report, please see:

[www.net.org/reports/globalwarming/emissionsreport.pdf](http://www.net.org/reports/globalwarming/emissionsreport.pdf)

*Submitted by Stephen Nicholson*

***Don't Forget!***  
***The County Clerk will attend the January meeting to administer the oath of office for all new and re-appointed EMC members.***  
***Please be prompt!***

***See you on the 14th.***